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Letters

How the C.I.A. Helped In Salvador's Election

To the Editor:

In his Op-Ed article of July 27, former United States Ambassador to El Salvador Robert White placed a false interpretation on a piece in The Wall Street Journal of July 16, which reported me as saying, "For instance, we helped in the El Salvador election. In Honduras, we put people through school and gave them instruments that can detect how much metal a truck is carrying. Some countries we help with photographic information, or sensors, or training for antiterrorist forces."

Mr. White takes only the first sentence, thus stripping the quotation of detail. This frees him to convert "help in the election" to "meddle in the election."

I was referring to the C.I.A.'s assistance in meeting a genuine concern on the part of both the United States and the Salvadoran Governments that the election be held, and that people not be intimidated from voting.

The whole American television audience on the evening of the national election saw with their own eyes how guerrilla forces succeeded in aborting the election in the provincial capital of Usulután by terrorizing its citizens. We provided the Salvadoran Government with information and capabilities which helped it to reduce the supply of weapons from Cuba and Nicaragua and to break up guerrilla formations intended to destroy the election by creating disruptive violence in other communities throughout El Salvador.

In addition, we provided election authorities invisible ink, which could be placed on the wrist of each voter and be detected again only under ultraviolet light. This was needed to assure an honest vote and to protect voters from retaliation, with which the guerrillas had publicly threatened anybody who voted.

WILLIAM J. CASEY
Director of Central Intelligence
Washington, July 29, 1982